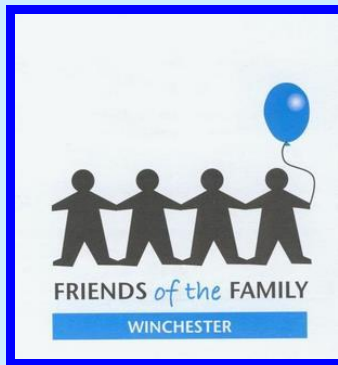


Friends *of the* Family Winchester



Annual Review

April 2012 – March 2013

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Bishop John Dennis

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Chair – Viv Wheeler

Vice Chair – Angela Moody

Secretary – Andrew Rutter

Hon. Treasurer - Jonathan Flory

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Dorothy Hamilton

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Colette Smith (resigned 3/6/2013)

Administrator/Bookkeeper – Helen Cramp

Under 5s Project Staff and Volunteers

Project Leader – Colette Dunford

Play Leader – Pat Slade

Marcia Cunningham

Nigel Drew

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Angela Moody

Valerie Wright

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5s to 13s Project Staff and Volunteers

Project Leader – Samantha Hunt

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Ann Lee

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Claire Pigott

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Hannah Parker

Nicky Bryant

Jane Horton

Lara Masters

Lesley Phillips

Pat Stephens

Ceara Watson

James Wrixon

Lucinda Pilbrow

Dad's Group

Project Leader - Charlie Wright



Chair's Report

The last year has seen the confident continuation of our work to support families in Winchester. We were fortunate to start the financial year with a generous donation which enabled us to employ for the first time, a Fund Raiser. This has proved invaluable as an example of expertise as well as enabling us to achieve some substantial grants. We are continuing to use some of her templates in current grant applications.

The Friends Meeting House has been going through a period of refurbishment, meaning a move for our Under 5s group. However, thanks to the Round Table who provided a grant to cover hiring of premises at St. John's, our Under 5s Project has continued to flourish with Colette and Pat. We have seen a significant number of new referrals with their babies and toddlers. We are looking forward to being back in the garden this summer at the Friends Meeting House.

Our 5s to 13s Project is well accepted in the community with referrals from Social workers, Schools and Children's Services. Sam has done some outstanding training enabling us to send out a very high calibre of volunteer, well prepared for some complex families and children. She has also managed the Christmas pantomime treat, thanks to Penyards which is a special event for our families. Sam also collates our attractive seasonal newsletter.

We are proud of our 'Dad's Group' under the leadership of Charlie Wright who is now managing a fortnightly Therapeutic group as well as providing some one to one counselling for Dads whose children are under 5 (possibly a unique service in Winchester).

I am indebted to our hard working Administrator, Helen Cramp who manages the finances and office so efficiently. However I must also thank all my Trustees who give their time and commitment which make Friends of the Family such a vibrant and positive charity, thank you. A special thank you is due to Andrew Rutter, a Trustee, who has been our close Quaker connection. Andrew retires this year as a loyal Trustee. He has devoted endless time to supporting us, most recently with his picture project which has brought significant funds to the charity. We wish him well.

Viv Wheeler

The Early Years



Ann Titman, Joint Founder of Friends of the Family, reminisces on how it all began.....

Friends of the Family opened in November 1993 in the Friends Meeting House, Winchester. Its founders, Dorothy Richardson and Ann Titman had shared concerns for the families they worked with for some time. Dorothy was a JP, on the Juvenile Bench and had met many troubled teenagers, both in and out of prison. Ann, trained as an Almoner, had worked with families with handicapped children, one parent families, in a Child Guidance Clinic as well as in Adult psychiatry. Both were Quakers, also called Friends. Dorothy had been involved in the purchase of the Winchester Friends Meeting House, which was not just a place of worship but a place of service to the community.

Friends of the Family still meets in the Meeting House, owned by the Area Meeting, where it now has an office in the garden, as well as a toy store. Winchester Friends still support the group by allowing free use of the rooms used, and allowing the office to be built in the garden. Dorothy has continued as a trustee and volunteer whilst her energy and health allowed, and Ann as project leader for 13 years.

Friends of the Family is an innovative parenting group, working on 3 basic principles: Firstly, the importance of early intervention, both in childhood and as a parent, for both parent and child. Secondly, offering parents, usually mothers, the opportunity to take part in a group of peers in a therapeutic ambience and thirdly, offering children child led play.

The impact of past experiences is recognised as an important factor in parenting, and all parents attending have experienced childhood abuse, domestic violence of all kinds, mental health problems, or trauma of some kind. Inevitably, the birth of a child will bring unsettling reminders from the past, pre-occupation with these anxieties, and uncertainty as to how to manage it all.

/Continued.....

The separate parents group, led by the project leader, offers a therapeutic approach for the parents and allows them time to talk about these experiences and to be understood in a safe, non-judgemental and nurturing environment. By finding the courage to share with their peers, parents can be supported, and then move on to help each other. There can be tears, and laughter as well as disputes and reconciliations.

The help needed by the children is more urgent as they cannot afford the time needed by their parents. The children reflect the troubles at home in their play, and they also need to be heard. But their faces light up as they run into the Meeting House, greet each other and settle to play in their own way. Play leaders and volunteers work alongside the children, building up trusting relationships. Group activities build up the bond, such as shared lunches, outings and celebrations. Staffing too is a co-operative venture, professionals and volunteers working to a common purpose in supporting vulnerable and chaotic families.

Has it worked?

We have seen:

- improved parenting to children in the group
- warmer bonding when another baby is born
- parental relationships have become more settled and co-operative
- parents relate more positively with other agencies.

Overall we have seen greater sociability and confidence in both parents and children, and a better management of crises.

Ann Titman



Under 5s Project Leader's Report



It's been a busy year of working with the many children's services in Winchester! We are working with twelve Families with children ranging from newborn through to Pre schoolers and are looking forward to a busy summer season ahead.

The Mums group has been addressing issues of anxiety for many brought about by the circumstances they are in. Some are court cases between parents, relationship breakdowns and historical trauma revisited in the 'here and now'. Some of these Mums are unable as yet to manage the Group setting and they have individual sessions weekly. It is the ethos of Friends of the Family that all Mums will eventually aim to be in Group as that is the vehicle of lasting change.

We have some new families just starting their journey with us and others who are about to celebrate moving on to new challenges with more stability and confidence than when they came.

We are carrying out evaluations with the Mums annually (via Survey Monkey) and some of those comments have been included later in this Review.

We have been supported by the YMCA at St Johns House during the refurbishment of the Meeting house (Jan-June) and we owe them a debt of gratitude for accommodating us so well.

Our Dads Group, run by Charlie Wright, is now firmly up and running. It runs on a Friday evening and Charlie also works 1:1 with some men for whom it is appropriate. We hope to build on this provision and Charlie works closely with Children's Centre's who run "Lads and Dads Days". He has become a familiar figure at these events.

Dr Richard Fry (Child, Family and Adolescent Psychiatrist) continues to offer consultancy at our Team meetings and under this guidance we can explore any concerns that we have.

We look forward to the summer holidays, our Summer outing and another year ahead of consistent, stable and reliable support to Mums AND Dads with children under Five.

Colette Dunford
Under 5s Project Leader

Under 5s Play Leader's Report



The children's group has got progressively busier. At the end of the summer we had two 'new' babies to join the existing two. With another three babies we now have seven children under 2 years old! As always, the Tuesday sessions are the busiest with twelve under 5's recently at a term time session.

The increase in numbers has not only been due to more families; others have been attending more often. Two children who were only attending on either a Tuesday or Friday now regularly come on both days. This seems to have helped them both become more socially competent and confident. Others attending more often are finding it easier to separate from Mum.

Fortunately we have also had new Tuesday play volunteers joining us. We are also very grateful for the stability, commitment and reliability provided by our long standing volunteers.

Supporting children's language development has been a particular feature this year and a special topic at team meeting. Those with severe delay are now making good progress. Old mobile phones, made child safe, have been very popular with all ages, stimulating 'conversations'. We look forward to a speech and language assistant coming to talk to the mums and joining us at the next team meeting.

We have seen some lovely imaginative play. One baby, barely walking, put her bottle of milk on the brick trolley, carefully laid her doll next to it, then completed packing her 'pram' by adding a mobile phone. On another occasion a 3 yr old put a dolls' house person and bed, carefully covered by a small blanket, in the toy shopping trolley and wheeled her 'pram' across the room.

The children have varied enormously in how easily they have settled and separated from their mums. Some settle quickly, although obviously pleased on being reunited with Mum. Others take longer.

Back at the Meeting House we are really enjoying the wonderful garden and looking forward to a busy summer. During the school holiday, with older siblings joining us, the space will be very welcome with potentially 20 children!

Pat Slade
Under 5s Play Leader

Comments from Under 5s Mums:

"You don't feel judged and you know that if there was ever a problem it would be dealt with fairly and quickly"

"The people who run the group from Colette who runs it to the volunteers have all been fantastic with my son and as well as me all the time. The support they gave by allowing me the time to go in to the mothers group and looked after my son helped me as a single parent overcome post natal depression and also support me through other things in my life. Without Colette and all the volunteers I don't believe I would have the self-confidence I now have and have gotten through the struggles in my life at the point my sons lives are now better"

"FotF offers the vital support that parents require in a non-clinical relaxed atmosphere and there is nothing like this in the area, a group for parents and children opposed to just children. The way that this group is more focused on supporting parents is its unique attribute"

"I haven't had much experience of baby groups but the support that is offered and the volunteer standard is second to none".

"Having a regular session with the other mums has enabled me to make friends as well as share my difficulties and successes. I have been able to take some very serious personal issues there and feel supported and not judged".



Volunteer Training



This year we have been able to offer Friends of the Family volunteers from all projects both in house and external training opportunities. This has included training on domestic abuse which was led by the staff from the Trinity Centre. This was very well attended by both project volunteers and staff and helped us all realise the impact that domestic abuse has on the children whose families are experiencing it.

There have also been two 5s to 13s volunteer training programmes for 8 new volunteers. The volunteers who have committed to these 14 hour training programmes in order to become befriender volunteers have or are being carefully matched to the children and families that are referred to this project.

“The course was professionally led, stimulating, informative and enjoyable accompanied with interesting fact sheets and reference literature. All the sessions were very relevant and helpful, leading to discussions to aid us in our roles as befrienders. I especially enjoyed the sessions on Active Listening and hearing the personal experience of one of the volunteers...a thoroughly enjoyable course.”

“The training was extremely useful, giving us an insight into the issues surrounding families and practical methods for working closely with a family in their own home, as well as equipping us with an understanding of processes such as Child Protection. We learnt a lot about working with families in a befriending capacity, establishing boundaries and listening skills. Each session was different and it was very interesting to meet previous volunteers and hear about their experiences, as well as a nice opportunity to connect with other new volunteers. Everyone brought different perspectives and new questions to the discussions, and the mid-session snacks were highly enjoyed!”

5s to 13s Project Leader's Report



This year has been as busy as usual for the 5s to 13s Project with births, deaths and marriages all featuring in the lives of the families that we support. Throughout the year the 5s to 13s volunteers have supported 14 Winchester based families and their children (three more than the previous year) offering their dedication and commitment not only the focus children they have been matched to but also to the children's families as a whole. The volunteers have made over 300 weekly two hour visits to the family home, helping the families to address the difficulties that they are facing and encouraging them to find their own solutions to overcome them. There have been two volunteer training programmes run, providing the project with eight new volunteers.

The 5s to 13s Project has now been established for five years. As part of our monitoring and evaluation process and in order to assess the impact that this project has had and is having on the children and families that it supports, we undertook an extensive evaluation of the project. This evaluation took place between October - December 2012 when we asked current and past project families and volunteers to comment on the existing project and suggest any additional activities or changes to the way we delivered our service. We provided a range of ways in which they could do this, but the majority were conducted as face to face interviews using written questionnaires. We also contacted the project's main referral agencies and asked them to comment on the value and delivery of the current service.

From this evaluation process it was clear from the families' and children's responses that those who have a 5s to 13s volunteer once a week, for two hours, had received significant benefits from this service. 100% of the families who participated in this evaluation process agreed that this is a unique service that cannot be found elsewhere in their community. It not only offers practical help but also emotionally supports both the children and their parents through difficult times. The parents also reported that confidence in their parenting had increased because having a volunteer had helped them to understand how their children learn and develop. The findings also suggested that the parents' emotional stability and their general mood had improved and this in turn had improved family relationships for 80% of the families.

For the children, the findings also demonstrated a positive outcome with 90% of them reporting that they felt happier since their volunteer had been befriending them. It was also clear from the variety of activities that the volunteers had engaged in with the children that there were many opportunities that the children would not have ordinarily been able to undertake had the volunteer not helped to facilitate them.

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For example: one volunteer has provided the opportunity for her focus child to engage in swimming lessons at the local leisure centre every week. This activity would have been an impossible task for the child's mother as she has no transport or funds to take the focus child and her two siblings across town for a half an hour swimming lesson at 4pm. Without the volunteer's commitment to this activity for the child, she would not have been able to swim: something that she enjoys, is healthy, has provided her with new friends and increased her self-confidence. It has also enabled her to represent her school in a recent school's swimming gala as she is the only child in her year group who is able to confidently swim the four strokes. This is such an incredible achievement of which we are all very proud.

My appreciation and thanks go to all the children, their families, volunteers and Trustees for engaging so positively with this project, without all of your support and commitment the last five years would not have been possible. Thank you.

Samantha Hunt
5s to 13s Project Leader



Referrer's views

"Having a reliable and regular support provided by Friends of the Family has increased confidence in many families."

"Many of the children and their families are in a life situation where they feel they are unloved, no one cares and nobody is there just for them. The project allows the child, in particular, to feel that for two hours a week there is someone who cares about them.....makes them feel that they really matter. They can also be made to feel that outside those two hours the volunteer still has them in their thoughts and this can also help them to feel valued and important and gain respect for themselves."

"The children gain a consistent role model who listens to them and introduces them to experiences that they might otherwise not get. They bake, do craft, read, look at homework, visit local parks...the children build a relationship and look forward to the visits. They speak of the volunteer very positively in school."

Focus Children's Views on their Volunteers....

"She is really nice and she is understanding."

"I can do things with my volunteer that Mummy doesn't have energy for."

"We did a lot of things together and I liked it because I could talk to her....and we cooked together!"

"Helping our family get through bad times and it's pulled our family closer."

"I like talking to my volunteer about my feelings. I think our family is close as we can all now talk together."

"I really like my volunteer because she is very nice and a good driver!"

"I thank you very much for everything you have done for us. It's made me realise that I have a life and that I have to do well. My volunteer has pulled our family together as she is someone different I can talk to instead of my Mum and she listens and gives me advice. Thank you so much!"

and their parents' views.....

"Having a volunteer has made a big difference to our lives. She goes out of her way to support and understand us."

"Our volunteer is very supportive we can talk about anything"

"Because of my volunteer, I have been taking a parenting course. Now I feel more able to do it and more able to benefit from it."

"Since our volunteer came, she has helped me see that my son is not just a naughty child but that also he is trying to express himself. I am trying to understand his behaviour in order to find solutions."

"Since the volunteer has been visiting I still have my ups and downs, but more ups than downs"

"I feel much more confident and have gone back to work - A positive step to not feeling trapped"

"It's more team work now, not just me on my own."

"Although my general mood isn't much different, the volunteer always makes me feel better when I speak."

"I have found my sense of humour again!"

Committed 5s to 13s Volunteers

From the evaluation responses from the 5s to 13s volunteers, it was evident that in their experience the project is an efficient, professionally run and beneficial service for the children and their families. The volunteers felt well supported by the organisation and reflected positively on the initial and on-going training programme. They were also very aware of how their regular, consistent commitment engages the children and families and helps forge positive relationships built on mutual trust.

"I have now worked with my first family and little girl, A, for about a year. When I started I really had no idea what the challenges would be, and sometimes it has been extremely challenging. The training that I received from Friends of the Family prepared me well for this and as a result I have really enjoyed dealing with the more difficult moments and the ensuing growth that has come as a result. Focus child's A's mother, S, has her own issues which initially I wanted to try to change as a means to help A. I soon realised that this was not my job. I had to accept the way S wished to run her home and bring up her child and my involvement was to work with A and do all I can to add something to her life.

A loves the security she finds in routine and most weeks we visit the library where I can sit with my arm around her, reading stories. She tells me it is the thing she looks forward to the most each week. She also usually reads at least one book to me and this has helped her improve her reading, something she was well behind with at school. There have been some moving moments when, for example we were reading a story about the seaside showing pictures of a beach and A informed me that she has never been to the seaside and built sandcastles. We also visit the park, look at and stroke the pets in the pet shop, and in the holidays go swimming or to the Itchen Valley Country Park.

Overall I find the time I spend with A most rewarding and it is wonderful to realise that by doing something apparently quite small once a week I really can make a big difference to the life and future of a child."

Judith Davis

5s to 13s Statistics for April 2012–March 2013

- 14 families supported throughout the year
- 302 visits made by volunteers to families
- 10 new volunteers trained
- 13 new referrals
- 6 families moved on from the project
- 2 volunteers left the project to develop their professional careers



Fundraising Events

2012-3 was our best year yet for fundraising.

The year began with two events at the Cathedral, a Tower Tour and a talk by Professor Michael Wheeler on 'The Victorian Way of Death'.

In May the Winchester Film Festival organisers, at Winchester University, selected Friends of the Family as their designated charity for their 2012 Film Festival. This not only generated a great deal of positive publicity with a promotional video about our work being screened before every film during the two week festival, but also by raising £2000 in ticket sales!

Our annual Quiz Night benefitted greatly from having Alastair Stewart as compere and thanks to the hospitality of Winchester College and the excellent questions (set by Richard Morse once again) more than doubled its previous takings to raise £2,456 net of expenses..

A Covert sale in September was such a success, raising £757, that we will be there again this year. We must thank Charlotte Bailey, our local County Councillor, for organising a Madding Crowd concert just before Christmas, and Miff Kayum for once again sponsoring a dinner, this time at the Bengal Sage. Each event raised well over £400.

We must remember the continued contributions from all the Q Box holders and for Pamela Peskett's work as controller of the scheme.

We must also thank those who made Friends of the Family the beneficiary of their events; especially the children of Pilgrims School who raised over £2,000 on a sponsored walk; St Bede School who kindly donated 50% of the proceeds of their Centenary Service at the Cathedral, and Josh Wheeler who ran a half-marathon for us. Also a special thank you to Andrew Rutter whose picture project (see separate article) has been so productive.

Lastly, our thanks to all those who gave so much time and effort into ensuring that all these events were such a success – we are truly grateful to you.

With our 20th anniversary this autumn there should be some exciting events to look forward to – keep an eye on our website and newsletter.

The Picture Project



Trustee Andrew Rutter has been using his artistic skills to draw pictures of people's houses (from modern terraced to listed buildings). Last year the scheme raised well over £1,000 for Friends of the Family from delighted customers.

Andrew writes:

"I first learned to draw Somerset church towers at my Quaker Boarding school. At my architectural school I decided to learn to draw accurately existing and proposed architecture and townscape. I used the professional skill to illustrate now proposals in Winchester from 1974 on, from the M3 down to detailed changes to historic buildings. Due to pressure of time these had to be relatively sketchy to help Councillors make good decisions. Since returning in 1998 I have had the opportunity to develop a more detailed style.

This has given me the confidence to charge owners £30 per hour plus expenses and give an estimate of time. Each portrait is an interesting 'challenge' and the amount of time depends on whether details like flint walls are necessary, but most come within the range of 2 hours field work and 2 hours finishing at home with washes, etc. The owner then receives the original drawing which they can either frame use as a reduced image to make a unique letterhead or turn into a printed Christmas card in colour. When thanking the owner for their cheque we have an opportunity of telling them more about our work".

If you would like to be the proud owner of one of Andrew's drawings, please contact him via the Friends of the Family Office.

Right, an illustration of Andrew's work.





Growing a Membership Base

We are most grateful to those supporters who have joined us or renewed their membership this year. Many members are offering support significantly above our suggested membership of £15 and this provides a welcome contribution to our income for the year.

One of our objectives for our 20th anniversary year is to widen our circle of membership and we hope that existing members will consider asking a few friends to join to build a wider base of support for the future

Jonathan Flory
Hon. Treasurer



Office Refurbishment

It is now one year since we saw the grand opening by the Mayor of Winchester of our newly revamped office. We are greatly indebted to a number of people who have enabled us to provide a bright, warm and welcoming space for our staff and clients.

The office was the inspiration of a local interior designer, Claudine Cullimore, her vision was possible by the generous donation of £1,000 from Rathbones, a Winchester company who also donated volunteers to paint and update our premises.

We were fortunate to acquire the services of a recently retired maintenance manager, Phil Crump who oversaw the completion of the project, along with his technical skills as both electrician and carpenter.

We are delighted with our 'IKEA' office and many thanks to others who provided the finishing touches with a sofa and comfortable cushions. We love it!

Viv Wheeler



Treasurer's Report

Overall this year we recorded a small surplus in a difficult environment for small charities and this is testament to the strong local support we have maintained among friends and supporters. Total income was £41,430 and total costs were £39,600.

Donations and events fundraising (£34,294) have been significantly higher than last year and this has offset reduced income from grants (£6,900) and the additional one-off costs of employing a fundraiser as well as the expense of an office refurbishment.

At the year end of 31 March 2013, we held cash reserves of £20,260. We have reported above on the range of fundraising events both new and established and particular thanks go to those who have initiated and supported these events and to those individuals, members and local businesses that have been generous in their continued support.

We continue to receive grant support from Hampshire County Council in recognition of the local value of our work and this year also attracted new grants from Henry Smith and Garfield Weston and benefitted from professional advice on grant applications. Nevertheless, the grant environment remains tough.

Costs reflect primarily salaries which include part time administration and secretarial work. We have the use of an office in the Friends Meeting House which is a valuable contribution to keeping costs down and we remain extremely grateful to the Friends for their continued hospitality and support.

The new financial year has started well and we hope to continue to diversify our sources of income and to widen our membership in this our 20th year.

Our thanks to Sarah LeMay for examining the accounts and for her guidance in their completion.

Jonathan Flory
Hon. Treasurer



THANKYOU

....to the many who have
contributed to making this a good
year for Friends of the Family

Pilgrim's School Winchester Film Festival

Hampshire County Council The Henry Smith Charity

The Garfield Weston Foundation Elizabeth and Prince Zaiger Trust

The Tansy Trust A Private Hampshire Charitable Trust

Rathbones Penyards Paul Lunn-Rockliffe Trust

Winchester Round Table Cornwall donors

St Bede Church of England Primary School Winchester Baptist Church

All Saints Church Winchester Kingsworthy Parish Church

St Lawrence with St Swithun St Matthews Winchester

Dower House Nursing Home The Madding Crowd The Dever Singers

Winchester College Richard & Chrissie Morse Alastair Stewart

Andrew Rutter Professor Michael Wheeler Miff Kayum

Winchester Cathedral Josh Wheeler Waitrose Plc

Harestock School Alton Quakers Easton WI

Pam Peskett Anonymous donors Members Q Box holders

The Friends' Meeting House Winchester WACA YMCA

Our Project Leaders, Play Leader, Volunteers and Trustees



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